(c) whether any representation has been received from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh for compensating the revenue loss due to implementation of VAT; and

(d) if so, what steps Government have taken in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) As per the information furnished by the State Government for the months of April and May, 2005, the States of Bihar, Kerala and Tripura have incurred revenue loss, in absolute terms, compared to corresponding period of last year.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Establishment of Rural Business Hubs

175. SHRI A. VIJYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to establish rural business hubs;

(b) if so, the details including the States selected for the above, criteria adopted for selection, the sectors selected and the proposed period of implementation of the above rural business hubs;

(c) the details regarding the response asked from various States and the response received from the States as on today, State-wise and category-wise; and

(d) the details of financial and technical support provided/proposed to be given to States, State-wise and category-wise as on today?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The Prime Minister in his inaugural address to the Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj held on 29-30 June, 2004 emphasized the importance of providing Rural Business Hubs, drawing on China's experience of Town and Village Enterprises that add value to agricultural produce in rural

areas. As a follow up to this, a National Presentation on Rural Business Hubs with the theme "Economic Empowerment through Panchayats" was held on the 5th November, 2004 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in collaboration with the Confederation, of Indian Industry (CII) in which more than 1000 elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) from States and Union Territories and also about 20 members of the Cll participated. Several presentations were made on various economic activities which provide opportunities to set up Rural Business Hubs. As a follow up to the Conference, the Minister of Panchayati Raj has written to all elected Panchayat representatives who attended the presentation to indicate their respective areas of interest in setting up Rural Business Hubs. For wider dissemination, it has also been decided to publish advertisement in prominent newspapers for the purpose. Responses received would become the basis for developing State-wise projects for promotion of Rural Business Hubs through Panchayats.

To this end, Rural Business Hubs Council has been set up, co-chaired by the Minister, Panchayati Raj and Shri Sunil Munjal, former Chairperson of Cll, to promote public-private Panchayat partnership to foster Rural Business Hubs.

Nine States *viz.* Uttaranchal, Kerala, Karnataka, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Assam have been initially selected as focus States for the purpose of facilitating the establishment of such Rural Business Hubs. Representatives from the Ministry/CII have been assigned the responsibility of taking up the facilitation process in the States concerned for Rural Business Hubs to be established in association with Panchayati Raj Institujtions. Local Cll offices in the States concerned would be actively involved in the facilitation at the State level. Models such as the Chinese Town and Village Enterprises and the Thailand Model of "One Thamboh, One Product" (OTOP) could be used as initial examples for developing State-specific models.

Sale of Liquor at Petrol Pumps

176. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the Petrol pumps in the Capital have got licences to sell liquor;